

**Amendments to the Specification**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2 line 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Accordingly, the present invention provides a valve plate assembly comprising a valve plate, a reed valve, a cylinder head, and a suction chamber positioned between the valve plate and the cylinder head, the reed valve being such that it comprises a reed, a port which is opened and closed by the reed, and damper means for mechanically damping motion of the reed; the port being positioned in the valve plate; the reed being positioned on a side of the valve plate which closes a cylinder of a piston and cylinder arrangement whereby the reed flexes into the cylinder when the reed opens the port; and the damper means comprising a tube which is connected [attached] to the valve plate, which extends vertically into the suction chamber, which is in communication with the port on a side of the port remote from the reed, and which is of such a size that, in use of the valve plate assembly, the tube contains a column of fluid which is sufficient to provide substantial mechanical damping of the motion of the reed.

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